2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

vals involved animal sacrifice by Nayars in which Brahmans and temple servants took no part.

Consistent with these differences in ritual practice, Nambudiris and temple servants were vegetarians and followed rules of non-violence. Royals, chiefs, and Nayar retainers were warriors and until modern times usually ate meat and drank liquor. The matrilineal castes of temple servants were otherwise culturally similar to Nayars, with whom they probably had a common origin.

Below the Chakkyars and the Pushpagans, the Nambyars, Psharodis, Variyars, and Puduvals disputed for ritual rank and would not interdine. These castes ranked roughly parallel to the district chiefs, with whom they had few social relations and did not interdine. They ranked above the retainer Nayars, who might receive food from them but might not give to them. Marars ranked below the other temple servants and parallel to retainer Nayars, with whom, however, they had few social relations outside the temple and did not interdine.

The Nayar Menials in Temples Below all these aristocratic castes came certain small matrilineal castes of menial, non-military Nayars whose work was largely connected with temples. Vattekad Nayars were oilmongers; Odatt Nayars, tile makers; Andura Nayars, temple potters. One Vattekad lineage was present in every village to supply oil for temple lamps. Often the headman of the Vattekad lineage was the shaman of the Nayar Bhagavadi temple. Vattekad Nayars also performed household tasks for Kiriattil Nayar village headmen, which ordinary Kiriattil Nayars were too proud to do. Odatt and Andura Nayars were very small castes,[8] and one lineage might serve six or eight villages.

The Nayar Servant Castes Below the temple menials came three matrilineal castes of servant Nayars with "degrading" occupations. Chidigans (called Attikurssis in the Calicut kingdom) were funeral priests of the higher matrilineal castes. Veluttedans were washermen of all the castes above them and Vilakkataravans were barbers of all the castes above them. One lineage of each was usually present in a village. Funeral priests ranked above barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank and would not interdine.

Social Relations among the Higher Castes The castes so far men-

[8] The kings permitted only Brahmans, royalty, and the greater chiefs to roof their houses and temples with tiles. Tile making was therefore a minor craft, and temple pottery was of superior quality to that used by commoners. The ordinary polluting caste of potters, Kumbarans, camped outside villages and exchanged their wares for grain.

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

originally rendered a portion of the produce to the landlord and additionally paid tribute in kind at New Year and at the succession of a new landlord or a new tenant on the death of the old (*ibid.*, I: 605–614). In return for their hereditary land rights tenants owed military and personal services to the landlord or to his military representative.

Each Nayar tenant household, like the landlord, retained a portion of land for cultivation by its serfs. Serfs were attached to the plots on which they lived, took the house name of their masters and were held as ancestral property. The master supplied the serf with daily rice, building materials, a house site, and special gifts at life crises and festivals.

Each tenant household also gave some lands to cultivating subtenant households (*verumpāttamdar*) of the Tiyyar caste. According to Logan, the latter traditionally retained one-third of the net produce and surrendered the rest to their masters (*ibid.*, I: 583).

The Nayar servant castes and most of the polluting castes of village servants (astrologers, artisans, bow makers, basket makers, etc.) owed their main services to the landlord, the Nayar tenants, or both. Each family held the hereditary service right of a village or occasionally of a small group of adjacent villages. Village servants gave their services to the appropriate higher-caste households when required. In return they received from each patron household customary biennial shares of rice and other goods after the two harvests of the year. Each servant family held a house site and garden from the landlord by hereditary right and was provided by its various patrons with the materials (metal, wood, etc.) of its craft.

Among the higher polluting castes, most of the village servants (astrologers, artisans, washermen, barbers, etc.) simply exchanged services reciprocally without making gifts of grain. Within this range of castes, however, Tiyyars, as cultivators, were subsidiary agents of redistribution, for they received the services of almost all the village servant castes and made biennial gifts to them of grain.

The village was thus almost self-sufficient for food and the daily necessities of life. In addition, part of its produce in rice and coconuts went out in the form of annual tribute given by the landlord to his district chief. The chief in turn gave tribute to the king and in addition rendered succession fees and gifts at life-crisis rites (Logan, 1951, II: ccxviii–ccxix; Ayyar, 1938: 270).

A large part of the king's revenue, however, came from taxes on overseas trade. Before 1500 the trade was in the hands of Arab merchants, who obtained pepper and other spices from inland land-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

A husband normally visited his wife after eating supper in his natal home, and left before breakfast. Even today in many orthodox Nayar homes men eat regularly in their taravāds and accept food in their wives' homes only on special invitation from their wives' kāranavans. Traditionally a husband placed his weapons outside his wife's door as a sign to other men that he was within. My informants in a Cochin village reported that, within living memory in the late nineteenth century, if two husbands called on the same night the one who came last might sleep outside on the veranda. Usually a woman's regular husbands knew each other and informally agreed upon their turns.

The relationship with the visiting husband was called *sambandham* (Sanskrit, "joining together"). At the start of a girl's first sambandham her husband came to her house privately at night, sometimes with a few friends of his own age. In the presence of the girl's kin he presented her with a white cloth of the kind worn as a skirt. The occasion was not marked by feasting. Later husbands might or might not present the cloth. A transient visitor is said to have left a gold coin beneath the woman's pillow, and a regular husband might do the same on the first night of his union.

While his relationship lasted, a regular husband was expected to make gifts to his wife at the three main festivals of the year. Vishu, in April, was the Malayalam New Year; Onam, in September, was a harvest festival; Tiruvadira, in December, was a women's festival to Kama Devan, the god of passion. The gifts were of bathing oil, bananas, wafer biscuits, and betel leaves and areca nuts for chewing. In some areas a husband also gave a loin cloth of superior quality at Onam. The gifts were prepared by women of the husband's taravād, and he should present them in person to each of his wives on the festival day. If a husband failed to make these gifts it was a tacit sign that he had ended the relationship. It should be noted that the gifts, trivial in value, were gifts of courtship and were in no sense maintenance. Bathing oil is a feminine toilet requisite; wafer biscuits are delicacies served at feasts; and the giving of chewing materials between a man and a woman is everywhere in South India associated with courtship or with the first night of marriage. A husband had no obligation at all to maintain his wife, for she received her food, shelter, and regular clothing from her taravād.

The only other obligations of a husband came at the birth of a child. When a woman became pregnant it was necessary for one or more men of appropriate caste to acknowledge possible biological

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

eage with which one was neither at enmity nor in regular asymmetrical political relationships. Thus the Travancore royal lineage several times adopted from Kolattiri, at the other end of Kerala, and the Calicut lineage from Nileswaram, the northernmost independent chiefdom of the Malabar Coast.

The giving and receiving of food, normally a hallmark of caste ranking, presented other problems. Some royal lineages were vegetarians and employed Nambudiri Brahman cooks who, being ritually higher than themselves, were permitted to serve them with food. Others seem to have drawn to themselves a small group of lineages as cooks and houseservants upon whom they conferred equivalence of caste rank, while maintaining them as their social inferiors and not intermarrying with them.

RESIDENCE AND KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

The property groups of village headmen's and chiefly lineages had residential arrangements similar to those of retainer Nayars, except that their houses were larger. The men of these groups visited their lower-ranking wives in the latters' homes. If they lived nearby, visits would occur at night; if at a distance, the husband might visit his wife about once a month and remain for two or three days. Similarly, women of these groups received visits from their higher-ranking husbands at convenient intervals. If he came from a distance the husband brought his own servants and cook, occupied a building near the taravād house, and stayed at his conjugal family's expense.

In the royal lineages each property group occupied a large palace. Within it each princess had her own suite of rooms in company with her children under the age of fifteen. Princes over this age had private rooms in a separate wing. The Nambudiri Brahman husbands of princesses (who were younger sons in their own households and had no managerial duties) lived at the palace for the duration of their marriages and were maintained at its expense. In the daytime they occupied a building within the royal courtyard, with its own bathing pool, kitchen, and servants, and visited their wives' rooms mainly at night. Junior princes visited their wives in nearby retainers' households or in more distant chiefly taravāds. Each royal sthāni had his own palace, estate, and retainers for the duration of his office. He would normally bequeath a house to a Nayar wife within the palace grounds and visit her and his children there.

Although group marriage appears to have existed in theory among aristocrats, polyandry was in fact perhaps less common than among retainer Nayars. Princesses are said to have been sometimes poly-

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

Nayar: North Kerala

The Nayars of North Kerala live between the Chandragiri and the Kora rivers. This area lay north of the Calicut kingdom and had been conquered by the Kolattiri kings at some period before the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 283; Innes, 1908: 57). It then disintegrated into the small kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. North Kerala was invaded from the Bednur kingdom of South Canara in the 1730's. It was later occupied by Muslim armies from Mysore between 1766 and 1792, after which it passed under British rule (Logan, 1951, I: 360, 399–473). This account deals with conditions before 1760, so far as these are known, and with the major changes of the nineteenth century.

Ecology

The mountains approach nearer to the sea in North Kerala than in Central Kerala. There are fewer stretches of lowland suitable for wet-rice cultivation, and gardens of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and spices on hillsides are more extensive. Since rice was the main subsistence crop, population density was lower than in Central Kerala. The houses of a village (*dēsam*) were scattered in gardens on hillsides surrounding a wet-rice flat in a valley. Villages were often separated by three to six miles of uncultivated scrub or jungle. Until the Mysoreans built roads after the 1760's, transport and communication by narrow mountain paths were difficult, especially in the heavy monsoons.

North Kerala had four major ports during the period of European trade—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, and Badagara (Hamilton, ed. 1727: 369–371). Pepper and other spices were exported from inland villages probably from Roman times, but villages were virtually self-sufficient for food until the mid-eighteenth century. After that time the Mysoreans' roads permitted greater import of goods both from the coast and from Mysore, and greater spatial mobility. In the nineteenth century cash-crop farming for export increased, as did imports of

796 777 the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon on this particular morning. According to Nair and even general Hindu Mythology there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance ashes, firewood, oil and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as, reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold and such like ones on the morning of the next New Year. Whereas wholesome and favourable consequences can be produced by the sight of auspicious objects like those just enumerated. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sight-worthy objects on the New Year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known, in native phraseology, as a *kani*. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A Grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed clothe, some "unprofitably gay" flowers of the *Konna* tree, a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps filled with cocoanut oil "clear as diamond sparks" are kept intensely burning and a small plank of wood or some other seat is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house and takes them blindfolded so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the Kani. The members are seated one after another in the seat and are then and not till then asked to open their eyes and carefully look at this Kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers which they have bought [735] and stored for the occasion. The Kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the carelessly confused noise of the crackers the morning breaks and preparations are begun for the morning [264] meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice-kanji with a grand appendage of other eatable substances and in others to [262] ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on grand scales.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 533 [515] the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is presently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction and struck against its surface. So that the water is completely ruffled and is splashed in all directions producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops a while for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee; and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths [526] and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an Uzhinjal.*

796 264 262 [535] "On the festival day after the morning bath is over, they take a light meal and in the noon the family-dinner is voraciously attacked; the essential and almost universal ingredients of which being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

796 [586] "The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening as they are bound to do on the Onam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the [132] wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during [515] which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of

* A swing made of bamboo.

during that night for fear of calumny. There, the men do not care much. We will now bid adieu to Mr. Gopal Pannikar, but not without thanking him for all he has told us about his own people.

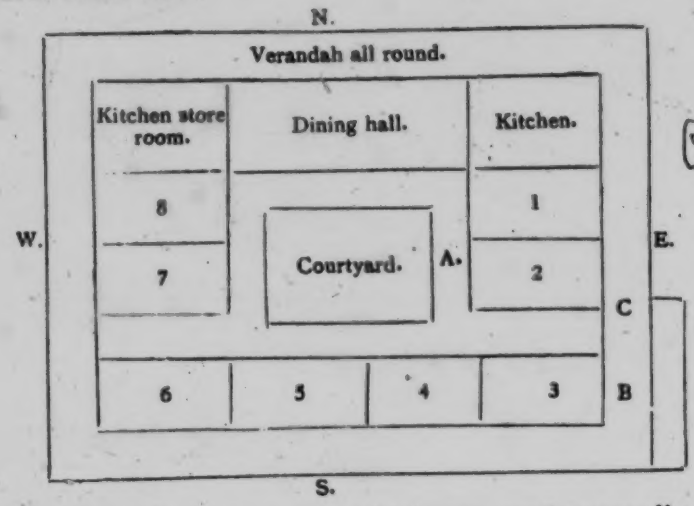
Uchâl (Uchaval) is the term used for the first three days of the Malayalam month Makaram, usually falling between the 15th and 20th January. All over Malabar, with the exception of Wynâd, above the ghâts, there are two crops of rice every year, one with the south-west, one with the north-east monsoon. Elsewhere in Southern India rice land is always irrigated, but in Malabar there is no such thing, practically, as irrigation, the heavy rainfall rendering it unnecessary, and the earth goddess—Bhûmi Dêvi—brings forth her fruit under the stimulus of the rain from heaven. She produces the crops as a female produces her children, and from the 1st of the month Makaram, she rests until the cultivator again begins to disturb her, three months later, when the showers preceding the south-west monsoon fall. Uchâl is the period of three days when the earth goddess menstruates. Granaries and all receptacles of grain are closed during Uchâl—they are not even visited. Paddy is not sold. No implement of cultivation is touched. The rice to be used during the three days is pounded out beforehand and kept separate. But it is no season of gloom; rather is it one of festivity. As particular forms of food partaken on specific occasions have an interest of their own, we must not omit description of the Uchâl cake—the Pâla Ata. (Pâla—spathe of the areca-palm, Ata—cake). A paste is made of rice flour and water and spread thickly (about an inch thick) on one side of two pieces of the spathe of the areca-palm, each piece being from 2 to 3 feet in length and about 8 inches wide. Powdered jaggery, scraped cocoanut, powdered ginger, a little garlic and other condiments, are then put in small quantities on the paste. The two pieces of the spathe are then placed together, and they are stitched all round the edges. The whole is covered over with soft red mud and put into a fire where it is kept until the mud covering cracks. The cake is then cooked and ready for eating. It is cut and distributed to members of the family and friends.

In parts of Malabar the Tîyan tenants present these cakes to their Nâyar landlords as a token of allegiance or submission. Rice is the only article of food which if prepared by a Tîyan the Nâyar cannot eat; so the Nâyar has no caste scruples about eating the Pâla Ata prepared

564
for him by the Tîyan at Uchâl. I recollect a case of 262
murder which arose out of nothing more or less than a 466
Tîyan tenant's refusal to present his Nâyar landlord with 241
a Pâla Ata at Uchâl. I once tried to preserve one of these cakes, but the results were too disastrous for description.*

HABITATIONS.

A house may face east or west; never north or south. 342
As a rule the Nâyar's house faces the east. Every [351]
garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, as in the case of of the poorest houses a small portico, or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nâlupura or four- 342
sided house, which may be taken as representative of the 556
houses of the rich:



[778]

Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms which are used generally for storing grain.

At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper story occupied by the female members of the family. At B is a staircase to the rooms of the upper story

*For much of the information regarding Uchâl I am indebted to Mr. M. Raman Menon. [115]

754 is truly human. Belief in magic and witchcraft, symbolic
789 hurts and cures, and the like, are very deep in human nature; reason and culture do not efface it. It is one of the earliest heirlooms of the human family, and it will in all probability persist to the end. We cannot think of man as being without it.* Hence the interest in investigating it.

791 But now, as Patelin's Judge said to the draper, let us return *à nos moutons*. There is nothing secret about the profession of the Panikkar. His rites are secret of course. They are *his* secret. But his profession is an honourable one. He is not ashamed of it, nor will he deny it. That is, so long as he confines his talents to the practice of *good* magic.

754 With the professor of the more lucrative *black magic*, it is quite another thing. No one will ever admit publicly that he practises *black magic*.

Black magic.—It would never do to avoid altogether the subject of black magic, which is cultivated and practised to a much greater extent in Malabar than elsewhere in the Southern Presidency. I hope to have more to say about it later on when we come to description of some of the lower races, and for the present we must be content with a rather bare description of it. We have seen already that a few Nambûtiri Brahmans practise it. A few Nâyars also do so. But as a rule the man who really works in black magic is the Parayan.
754 The old story. It is always the man of inferior race who
564 is superior in black magic. The Parayans of Malabar are not, I think, identical with the Pariahs (Parayas) of Southern India. There are obvious differences in physique. In parts of rural Malabar one may see a Parayan's little hut far away on the hill side, but one tries in vain to see and speak to its inmates, who flee into the jungle. The Parayans are complete outcastes, and their presence carries pollution to one of any superior caste within about a furlong. It is not too much to say that, as a rule, they are abhorred as the lowest of the low. They eat beef, and are there-
[262] fore quite outside the pale of Hinduism. I have
[673] heard of fairly well authenticated cases of their stealing children of Nâyars, hiding them away in the forest and

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[171] * The reader who has not given much attention to the subject of Folklore, may be surprised by the evidence of the persistence of these beliefs in England, available in the publications of the Folklore Society, London. See "County Folklore," chapters on Witchcraft, etc.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar
Tiyyar

000 sexual jealousy of the natal kinsmen (projected on to spirits, gods, and ancestors) aroused by a woman's marital sexuality. The prohibitions on eating meat and condiments are those [262] stipulated for both men and women in all periods of pollution and also in periods of abstention [783] to obtain ritual purity before worshipping a god. Since these foods are believed to induce sexual [834] desire, this prohibition is equated by informants with abstention from sexual intercourse (also enjoined in all periods of pollution or of enhanced ritual purity) and thus is comparable here to the prohibition on seeing a man or other male sexual symbol and of refraining from marital intercourse.

The practice of a girl's arming herself with a knife or an arrow during menstruation may signify an unconscious desire on the part of women to appropriate and arm themselves with the penis of the prohibited parent, or with any phallic symbol, and thus obviate the dreaded incestuous attack. Since the dread is also unconsciously a desire, this hypothesis is not incompatible with the other, that the knife and arrow are phallic symbols (perhaps paternal) with which the girl, by keeping them beside her, symbolically cohabits in the seclusion period.

On the side of men, the planting of an arrow by the girl's brother near the bathing pool after her first menstruation may be a sign of the brother's unconscious desire to copulate with his sister, or to drive away unwanted parental figures (the mother's brother or the father) whose sexual attack the girl both dreads and unconsciously desires. The same incestuous desire on the part of the brother appears in a South Malabar Nayar rite at the first menstruation, where the brother breaks a sheath containing coconut buds with his knife and counts the buds which roll out as an augur of the number of children his sister will bear.

It seems probable that in general the menstruous woman is unconsciously equated by a man with his mother as a forbidden sexual object; hence the fear of approaching her, based on unconscious fear of castration by the father. This view finds support in the beliefs that a man becomes impotent if he copulates with a menstruous woman, and that, by extension, trees and plants wither and die if she urinates or walks upon them. As is well known, the fear of impotence frequently indicates an unconscious fear of being castrated by the father for a sexual approach to the mother. The particular fear of the menstruous woman may lead back to an infantile belief, common in our own society, that parental intercourse is a sadistic attack by the father in which the mother is wounded and bleeds. The fact that the menstruous woman is armed with a knife or an arrow recalls an allied phantasy common among European infants, of the phallic mother who by intercourse has possessed herself of the father's penis and is thus doubly terrifying since, if one approached her, the penis would attack (castrate) oneself. (Klein 1932, pp. 103, 189–90.)

Why is it deemed necessary for a girl to 'menstruate' and be deflowered (both symbolically) before she has attained puberty and is likely to enter into real sex relations? The first part of my hypothesis is that this rite issues out of the marked horror of incest in these castes, which makes it necessary for the natal kinsmen of a woman to renounce the rights in her mature sexuality before she is in fact mature.

184 Among the Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars descent is matrilineal and the *ius in*
613 *genitricem* of a woman remains with her matrilineage headed by her *kāranavan*. This man is
564 usually her mother's brother and later her own elder brother. In all these castes but par-
602 ticularly among South Malabar Nayars, a woman must implicitly obey these kinsmen, sometimes to the extent of divorcing her husband of whom they are overtly jealous. The horror with which these castes regard incest within the lineage, however, makes the etiquette of behaviour between a woman and older men of her lineage formalized to the point of avoid- [586] ance. She may not sit before them, speak to them except under necessity, nor be alone with one of them. In the royal lineages a prince should not see his mature younger sisters and maternal nieces except on ceremonial occasions.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
301 called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
789 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament. The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil spirits.[1]

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
[824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars), betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru-Koda*, or the giving
262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
[123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
[613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
[782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
[783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

[241] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea
[114] that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

8:Panikkar I-4,5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

themselves by bathing in the temple tank, come to the *Darsana* (the aspect towards which the face of the image looks). There the priest brings the offering and the male member from either the father's family or the mother's own family takes a little of it on his pointing finger and gives it to the child. The child is supposed to inherit the qualities of the person who gives it the sacred rice, an idea allied to the superstition concerning godfather and godchild. There is, of course, a feast on the day at the child's house.

"Chaque société générale," says M. Van Gennep, "peut être considéré comme une sorte de maison devisée en chambres et en couloirs. . . . Chez les demi-civilisés ces compartiments sonts soigneusement isolés les unes des autres et pour passer de l'un à l'autre des formalités et des cérémonies sont nécessaires." This idea that in semi-civilised societies stages of life are marked out with great precision so that the passage from one to another necessitates ceremonies or "rites de passage" is applicable only in a very limited sense in the case of the Nāyars. Among them such ceremonies are few and very far between. The male children, after the *Churu Koda*, or the rice-giving ceremony just now described, have only one other ceremony to perform which is called *Sasty-Purty*, or the fullness of sixty years. Between his sixth month and his sixtieth year a male member of the Nāyar Society has no *rites de passage* to pass through. The *Sasty-Purty*, which takes place on his sixtieth birthday, is a sort of jubilee, after which respectable people are supposed to retire from worldly life. It is indeed a *rite de passage*.

Women have naturally more ceremonies than men. Apart from the *Talikettu* (described in the last chapter) a Nāyar woman has to pass through the ceremonies of *Terundu Kuli* (bathing after the first menses) and *Pulicudi* described above. After she has become a mother a woman can be said to be free from all ceremonies till her sixtieth year, when, after a *Sasty-Purty*, she also retires from active life.

The Nāyar funeral ceremonies are of a very complex nature. They show a great deal of Hindu ideas about soul and re-birth mixed with purely Nāyar beliefs about *Pretrams*, ghosts, etc., etc. It is important, in this connection, to notice at the very start that the Nāyars make a clear distinction between the ceremonies performed at the death of the eldest member of the family and those at the death of others. The following is the procedure generally adopted at the death of a Nāyar. As soon as a person dies he is bathed and clad in white, and laid on a bed made of long plantain leaves. If it is the eldest male or female member of the family that is dead, then all their relations on the matrilineal side present new cotton cloths, with which the corpse is covered and tied before it is taken to be burnt. Only the eldest members are burnt; others are buried. Apart from the greater importance attached to the death of the eldest members, the ordinary funeral rites are in essentials the same.

The presence of the *Mārān* (a particular caste among the Nāyars who perform the lesser priestly functions) is absolutely necessary on the occasion. He is sent for as

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

the child was well again. With this idea of evil eye is bound up what is known as *Kari-Nakku*, or black-tongue. When a man with *Kari-Nakku* utters anything it has effect at once. When the evil eye and *Kari-Nakku* are combined, then it has "much *orenda*" as an Angotkin would say. If your newly built house is looked upon with an evil eye and some good expression used by such a man about it, a lightning might set fire to it and destroy it the same night. If your mango tree is full of fruit this year and a man with an evil eye and *Kari-Nakku* looks at it and says "how fortunate," it might happen that for years to come it would bear no more fruit. If an envious woman, aroused by the green-eyed monster of jealousy, remarks how pretty a girl is, her hair might begin to fall off, her colour might fade, her cheeks might lose their bloom.

The fact to notice with regard to this is that you have to say complimentary things to effect evil. If you said how ugly a pretty girl is it would not affect her. You must say, out of your heart, how beautiful she is and then it might have effect. Everything is supposed to depend on whether it is said with or without design. If anything is said with design there would be no effect. Only when such exclamation comes out of the heart has it the power to do evil.

Koti.—Another evil-working power is *Koti*. The word literally means desire, but as an evil force it works only when a hungry person sees a rich and healthy fellow eating a good meal. If a poor man sees you eat, and his mouth waters at the delicacies before you, you are sure to suffer from his *Koti*, you will get stomach-ache and even dysentery. It is the particular look of the hungry man that has the evil effect. When once a man begins to suffer from another's *Koti* the only way to get over it is to eat some salt over which some *mantrams*, or magical formulæ, have been repeated.

The tabus which are prevalent among the Nāyars are too many to be described in detail here. A few examples will show how, even in the most important matters, life is regulated in primitive society. The reason for such prohibitions, as M. Reinach points out, is to live at peace with the spirits that are supposed to surround you.

You are prohibited from eating your food at dusk. It is supposed to be an awful sin, because everything is considered to be in "a state of suspended animation" in the very short period which marks the transition from a hot tropical day to a cool and breezy night. You cannot do anything at that time except bathe or pray. There are tabus on what you may do on particular days of the week :

> "*Ezuzcha Kulichalum*
> *Vyāzcha Kulikkaruthu.*"

This is a typical example of the Nāyar tabu. Its meaning is this : "Even if you have an oilbath on the seven days of the week, don't do it on a Thursday." Though there is no reason assigned for such a prohibition, there is a sufficiency of

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

This is mostly due to two reasons: 434 [832] [245]
First of all, there is the joint family system which provides for all the members without distinction. Secondly, every Nāyar family lives on its own plot of ground on which coco-nut palms are grown, which bring in a small but quite comfortable sum.

The standard of life is comparatively high. Among the richer classes it is fairly decent, even according to the higher material standards of Europe, while, among the poorer clases, it never comes anywhere near the uncleanliness, the misery, the unrefined and uncultured barbarism which is the atmosphere of the slum life of the big cities of Europe. Poverty is less disreputable than in civilised communities, and the difference this makes is immense. The peculiarly civilised idea that success is the criterion of intrinsic merit, and that, consequently, failure by itself proves that it was deserved, is almost totally unheard of among the Nāyars. The fact that the individual members of a family have to pool their abilities and, to some extent, their personal incomes, prevents the sharp distinction between the rich and the poor which is so characteristic of societies organised on an individual basis. 511 [613] [182]

Food.—The Nāyars are not vegetarians. Like all Hindus, they do not eat beef, but nothing else is prohibited. Fish is a favourite article of food, and there is an old couplet which sings: 262 [539]

> "*Kaṭal vāzhakka Kari yuṇṭaṟu ṇaṅa*
> *Bhaṁ Bhojana maṭu Koṭṭāttilla.*"
>
> "Then there is a kind of banana of the seas (fish)
> And the Nāyars cannot live without it."

There is another couplet, which says:

> "There is nothing among the various kinds of food which equals the flesh of a boar."

The Nāyars are great epicures and they cook beautifully. Rice, of course, is the staple food, but milk curds, butter and *ghee* are things of equal importance.

Most Nāyar families have three meals a day. The breakfast, among the poor people, consists of rice boiled with water in the form of a pudding. With it is taken as relishes pickles, fried fish, cooked vegetables, etc. The next meal is at noon. The main course, of course, is rice. The first part of it is eaten with butter, boiled peas, and many other relishes. The second course is fish, vegetables, etc., mixed with rice. The third part is eaten with buttermilk, mangoes, and pickles. The supper at night is also a meal of which rice is the chief part. The thing about it is that, though the main course is the same as porridge among the Scotch, the variety, as well as the taste, of the subsidiary dishes is what makes all the difference. 264 262

Clothing.—The typical Nāyar (male) clothing is the *Mundu*. This is generally 2½ yards long, 1½ yards broad, cloth of fine texture made at Eraniyal, in South Travancore. Nowadays, people wear cotton cloth from Lancashire, while the richer classes go in for Benares silk. 291 184 [439]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

588 a white cloth, one over the other. His permission is solicited
622 for the performance of the ceremony, and, with his consent,
[465] the *táli* is tied. He is paid four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two or sixty-four *puthans* (one *puthan* is equal to ten pies), according to the means of the family. He also gets some curry stuffs, betel
588 leaves, arecanuts and tobacco. There is also at the time a
574 grand distribution of *pán supári*, scented sandal paste, jasmine
[431] flowers to the women of the village and to the wives of the relatives assembled there. Then follows the feast to the guests assembled there, for which certain formalities are observed, with regard to the seats arranged for them; any violation of the social etiquette will result in the guests abruptly leaving the dining hall without partaking of any food. The women of the family and their relatives are first served. The women of the sub-caste as well as those of the village return home after chewing betel. The men of the same sub-castes and others are
[564] next served, then others lower in status to them, and lastly come in for their share the village barber and washerman. Provision is sometimes made to feed the members of the very low castes. In the meanwhile, what is known as *Pakarcha* (cooked rice, curries, sweets, etc., for the feasts) is sent to the families of relations. It must be said that the various
[262] preparations of the feast are boiled rice, vegetable curries, *pdyasam* (rice boiled in milk) and butter milk, and the grandness of the feast is judged by the quantity of rice prepared for consumption, and other preparations are in proportion to it. The first day's ceremony and the feast thus come to an end. The ceremony however lasts for the next three days, but there is nothing of importance on the second and the third days, except some dancing and music by maidens inside the *pandal*. In some places, on the third day, the caste-men of the village are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding and to varieties of amusements, such as the *Kathakali* and other performances.

588 On the fourth day, the caste-men are again invited. The
[564] married couple bathe in the neighbouring tank or river holding each other's hand, and are taken in procession to worship the deity in the village temple amidst the beating of tom-toms and merry shouts, after which the party return home. The bride-groom and the bride are taken to the kitchen, which they are
[586] prohibited from entering during the first three days, and there they dine together. After this, they proceed to the pandal where

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

played. There are also other kinds of plays, which are called *Attakkathas* (plays in which the incidents are represented by dancing and gestures) in Travancore, and *Kathākalis* in Malabar. Many additions to these were made by different scholars in different times, and they now number about fifty-six, most of which are now being acted. Many or all of them possess a high order of literary excellence, and are, year after year, prescribed as vernacular text books for University Examinations.

Personal adornment of the actors.—In the beginning the actors had no regular dress as at present, nor was there any curtain dividing the audience from the stage. The only theatrical property known in those days were figures clumsily drawn upon the bark of the areca palm and attached to the bodies of the actors, while the orchestra consisted only of the *maddalam*, a kind of drum. But innovations were soon introduced, and the first of these were those introduced by the Tirúr or Bettattunad Raja.

It may not be out of place here to give a short sketch of a day's performance as it is to-day. A travelling company, which usually consists of twelve actors, four singers, and four musicians who form an "orchestra with drums (*maddalam* and *chenda*), gongs (*chengalam*) and cymbals (*elathālam*)", is invited and lodged in a house near which they are to give the performance. In the morning they are given gingelly oil for an oil-bath, and are then served with rice, *kanji*, and *pappadam*. This forms their breakfast. After it, they retire to sleep till about four o'clock in the afternoon. At five o'clock they are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and half an hour later begins, by beat of drums and other musical instruments of the company, a formal announcement to the villagers in the neighbourhood that a play is to be performed that night.

The stage is nothing more than a crude wooden structure slightly raised from the ground. The drop curtain consists usually of pieces of cloth sewn together and the figure of a god or an animal drawn thereon. The auditorium consists of mats strewn on the floor for the audience to sit on, while two bell-metal lamps, containing cocoanut-oil and wicks of rolled cotton cloth, are the only means of lighting the theatre. Sometimes to add to the solemnity of the occasion conch shells are

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 to have been a period of uninterrupted peace, plenty, and pros-
773 perity. Growing jealous and apprehensive of the glory and greatness of this great king, the Dévás entreated Vishnu to quell the pride of this earthly potentate; and Vishnu, thereupon, appeared as *Vámana* (dwarf, his fifth incarnation) to request him for a plot of three feet of earth. The prayer was readily granted by the sovereign, who found to his cost that he could not satisfy him; for, large as his kingdom was, it was found to be very small when measured by the *Vámana*, who eventually placed his foot upon his head and pushed him down to the regions below. Grieved at the loss of their dear king, his subjects prayed to Vishnu to allow him to re-visit the earth once a year, and this is popularly believed to happon on the *Tiruvónam* day.

796 The festival is celebrated in honour of his re-appearance, and with it the return of happy days. It is practically confined to four days which are observed as holidays throughout Kérala, and people of all ranks from the prince to the peasant acknowledge them as such. Ten days before *Tiruvónam*, signs of the approaching festival are visible in every Nayar house, which, by its neatness and cleanliness all around, puts on a gay appearance. A portion of the front yard of the house, opposite to the store-room, is selected, and there a temporary stall of mud is put up for the royal visitor to sit upon. Flowers are strewn over it and on the night previous to the auspicious
[532] day, pyramid-shaped images of the king made of wood or clay, called *Trikkákarappan*, are placed upon it amid the deafening cheers of the members of the family who assemble at the gate to greet him. *Pujas* are daily made both in the morning and evening before the inmates take their meals, and this con-
[431] tinues up to the closing of the festival. In respectable families the festival opens with the presents of cloths by the *kárana-vans* to the junior members of the family as well as to other close relations, servants, and others. This is also the occasion when tenants make gifts of curry-stuffs, chiefly banana, for the celebration of the festival, and they are often rewarded with
796 cloths and also fed. A feast is held on a large scale, all the
574 four days, while the essential element in it is the consumption of
[262] bananas or *nendranpazham*. The fruits are cut into two or three pieces, boiled in water, and are eaten alone or with *pappadam*,

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 stick, it is possible to produce a kind of musical tone, for [534] which a party is organised to play on it. This entertainment is much admired, and interests the people very much.

(2). *Tiruvâtira* :—This is another important national festival, which falls on the *Tiruvâtira* day in Dhanu (December-[776] January). This concerns the Nayar women, and is said to commemorate the death of *Kâma Dêva*, the cupid of Indian mythology, by the burning fire of the third eye of the God [533] Siva. Before day-break the festive day, the young women of the Nayar families hasten to the nearest tank or river for bathing, and during the bath, they amuse themselves with *Tiruvâtira pittu*, songs accompanied by regular splashing of water, supposed to be symbolical of beating of the breast, on account of their grief for Kama's death. At day-break, they return home, and, gaily dressed and adorned, they [526] go to the nearest temple for worship. After a slight breakfast, they proceed to enjoy the *Uzhinjal* (a swinging apparatus made of bamboo and attached to a horizontal branch of a tree). [264] Immense pleasure is taken in this game. The family dinner [262] is at noon, when bananas, sliced and fried in cocoanut-oil, [431] seasoned with salt, are freely distributed among the friends and [263] relatives assembled there. Ripe plantains, and the sweet preparation of arrow-root flour purified and seasoned with jaggery or sugar and cocoanuts, also form one of the chief items of the feast.

[804] (3). *Vishu* :—Next in importance to the two great national [777] festivals just described, comes *Vishu* on the first of Medam (March-April), which is the astronomical new year's day; and a man's prosperity during the year is believed to depend on his seeing some good and lucky thing on the *Vishu* morning. It is the custom to prepare on the night previous, what is known as *Kani*. A bell-metal vessel (*uruli*) is taken, and in it are arranged a *grantha* or cadjan manuscript, a gold ornament, a new washed cloth, some flowers of the *konna* tree (Cassia fistula), some coins in a silver cup, a cocoanut cut into two, a cucumber, some mangoes, and a jack-fruit. On either side of the vessel, are also placed two lamps burning, while there is a plank of wood or some other seat placed in front of it. These are placed in the chief room inside the house, and in the morning, the members of the family, one by one, are taken to the

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

464 564 [212] The Nayars are the second in the list of the castes as regards learning, and only five per cent. of the population belong to the learned professions, but they are found in all departments of public service. The community is now availing itself largely of the benefits of modern education, and the members are fast becoming conspicuous in every walk of life. In every department of the State, in all the learned professions, they form a respectable majority, and the only people who successfully compete with them are the Brahman immigrants from the other coast. Though there are extensive landholders and substantial farmers among them, a very large majority of the caste-men are really very poor, being either petty farmers, agricultural labourers or day labourers, earning [357] wages at the rate of four to five annas a day. Even women of the poorer classes do agricultural work. Domestic servants in Hindu families are almost wholly Nayars, but none of them are artisans, weavers or potters.

264 [515] [771] Food. The Nayars seldom eat before their bath or before worshipping in the temple close at hand. Their meals are generally three in number, namely, breakfast which is taken early in the morning, a midday meal between eleven and twelve, and another between seven and eight in the evening, but this meal is generally taken by children between five and six. 262 The breakfast usually consists of *kanji* or rice gruel with some pickles and *pappadam* (round wafers made of 264 the meal of the kidney-bean). Coffee is becoming popular [272] among the Nayars, and this beverage is now often taken for [556] breakfast in well-to-do families. They do not recognize any danger in the use of it, and individuals of all ages indulge in it, so much so that it is even given to young infants. The midday meal, which is usually served between eleven and twelve o'clock, consists of boiled rice together with a few vegetable curries; and butter-milk mixed with rice is the last course.

Their supper which usually consists of similar preparation [562] is taken between seven and eight at night. The women take their food after the male members of the family. Only a minority of Nayars are strict vegetarians, though there is no prohibition against their eating meat, fish or fowl.

252 556 [557] In large aristocratic families, Brahman cooks are engaged to prepare the meals, but the serving is in some cases done by the members. In other families, on the contrary, the cooks of

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

252
the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to 556
the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone.

574
In grand festivities in which food is served to a large 564
number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given 252
when I deal with them.

564
The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the polluting castes. Even among themselves there are various grades of social precedence, and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may sometimes eat with those of the lower, but their women never take their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occasions, good many formalities have to be observed in the allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or etiquette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give *punnydham* (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class.

Social status.

[264] [574] [796] [576] [262] [271] [793] [783]

291
Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life of a nation, and hygiène plays a considerable part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth, two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features. A small upper garment is also worn while at home A Nayar always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there is no covering for the head.

Dress.

[293]

II: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWII Kerala AWII

against the all-India average of 7.5 acres; and over 60 per cent of the landholdings in Travancore-Cochin area are less than one acre in size.

1.31 The high pressure of population also reveals itself in an urge to push along the margin of cultivable area as far as possible. This is shown by the fact that the proportion of net sown area (45.25 lakh acres) to total area of the State was as high as 47.16 per cent against 39 per cent for the whole of India in 1956. The higher proportion assumes even a greater significance in view of the fact that forests cover over 25 per cent of the total area of Kerala (all-India—18%).

1.32 The agricultural labourers form a very high proportion of the agricultural population (Kerala 39%; India 17.5%), and the extent of under-employment among them is also one of the highest in India. The number of days of employment per agricultural labourer in Kerala was only 170 days per year[1], the lowest in the whole of India.

1.33 A deterioration in the position of the agricultural labourers is shown by the decline in the average annual income of agricultural labour households between 1951 and 1957. As can be seen from the table below, the average annual income of an agricultural labourer's household in Kerala declined from Rs. 486 in 1951 to Rs. 437 in 1956. This is a much steeper decline than observed in the case of the whole of India, presumably due to a higher rate of growth of population in Kerala than in India.

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS

	Kerala (Rs.)	*India* (Rs.)
1950-51	486	447
1956-57	437	437

Source: *Second Report of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee.*

Consumption Pattern

1.34 The level of consumption expenditure per head is a good indicator of the standard of living prevailing in any region. Table 5[2] gives a comparative picture of the pattern of consumption expenditure for the rural areas of Travancore-Cochin[3] and India. As may be seen, the average monthly consumption expenditure in Kerala (Rs. 18.64) is lower than that in all-India (Rs. 21.44), indicating a somewhat lower standard of living in the State.

1.35 The break-up of total expenditure into different items of consumption reveals some interesting points. The expenditure on foodgrains, milk and milk products is not only absolutely lower in Kerala but even as a proportion of total expenditure, it is considerably below the all-India average. On the other hand, meat, egg, fish and 'other food' absorb quite a high proportion of consumption expenditure in Kerala. These differences reflect the relative scarcity of foodgrains

[1] *Report of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee.*

[2] The data is compared for Travancore-Cochin and India (1952) because figures for Kerala State are not available. However, the conclusions are likely to be broadly true of Kerala also.

[2] See p 272, category 11b -- Analysis

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11

and milk products in the State as a result of which people have to lean more heavily on fish and tapioca.

1.36 Among the items of non-food expenditure the significant point is the higher percentage of expenditure devoted to clothing. The neatness and cleanliness of dress worn by the people of Kerala is evident even to a casual visitor to the State.

The Food Gap

1.37 The superior cropping pattern has also brought with it a huge food deficit. In this, Kerala leads all the other States. The current production of foodgrains is estimated at 9.6 lakh tons, whereas requirements on the basis of a norm of 17 ozs. per day would come to about 24 lakh tons, leaving a gap of nearly 14.6 lakh tons. The width of this gap is only partially closed by the consumption of tapioca as part of the diet by poorer sections of the people, although it does form an important second line of defence in the lean years as in 1940's when there was a severe food shortage.

1.38 Wide as the food gap in Kerala is, it has often led to the formulation of solutions which, if given effect to, would be retarding the operation of inherent growth factors in the Kerala economy. Every economy may present some "growth leaders", and development consists in stimulating and invigorating them. The climate and physical formation of Kerala favour the growth of a large number of valuable cash crops. It is this sector to which maximum attention should be devoted. Kerala is better suited to serve the role of an exchange economy which relies for its food requirements on the other parts of India and in return contributes to the economic development of the country by earning valuable foreign exchange through the export of raw and semi-processed commodities.

Other Primary Activities

1.39 Of the other three primary activities, viz., animal husbandry, forestry and fisheries, the former, that is, livestock is rather poorly developed. Due to the poor breed, and the natural deficiency in the livestock feed, the cattle is of poor quality with milk yields much lower than the all-India level. The only exception to this is poultry. Kerala can claim to have the best developed commercial poultry in India, the eggs produced in Kerala going even as far north as Punjab. However, in view of under-feeding and the poor conditions under which the birds are reared, there is still a lot of unexploited potential in poultry development.

1.40 Forestry and fishery are the two other sectors which hold an important place in the economy of Kerala. The forests in the State are rich in some of the valuable species like teak and rosewood. As a result of forest management on scientific lines and the high quality of forest growth, their yield per acre in Kerala during 1955-56 was as high as Rs. 18 against the all-India average of Rs. 5.6. This sector is crucial as a source of supply of industrial raw materials.

1.41 Kerala ranks foremost among the fish-producing States of India. In 1957 total fish landings in Kerala were 3.41 lakh tons. With only 10 per cent of the all-

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11

India coastline, 30 per cent of the country's fish production came from the coast of Kerala. There is, however, still ample scope for increasing the output of fish. Only the fringe of the potential for off-shore fishing has been tapped up till now. Similarly, it is believed that the output of fish can also be increased considerably from the coastal fisheries without subjecting the fishing grounds to undue pressure. Introduction of mechanized fishing and better fishing gear can add considerably to fish production. However, as it is, the fishermen are the most depressed class of persons in the economy, and unemployment is at its maximum among them.

1.42 Development of fisheries is of particular importance in case of Kerala in view of the large food deficit of the State. The requirements of rice for a balanced diet could be considerably reduced if it is adequately supplemented by tapioca and fish. Tapioca by itself is not an adequate substitute for rice requirements since it lacks in proteins. However, its food value can be considerably enhanced if it is combined with a sufficient quantity of fish.

Secondary Sector

1.43 The secondary sector covers mining and industry. Mining activity is comparatively limited in Kerala in view of the meagre occurrence of minerals. During 1955-56 mining contributed only 0.6 per cent of the State Income (all-India 1%). The chief mineral asset of Kerala is the beach sand. Ilmenite is the most important variety of the beach sands. Besides some fine quality china-clay, of which there are good reserves, other items of mineral wealth of Kerala are not of any particular importance.

1.44 The industries of Kerala, both the factory[1] and the non-factory type, are marked by a low level of productivity as shown by Table 4. The main reason for this is the backwardness of technology employed as would be true of other parts of India as well. While this may not apply to the modern industries run on a large scale basis, in some of which indeed the State has been a pioneer, the overall picture of industry presented as a whole is, nevertheless, one of poor technological level. Further, during 1955-56, the organized factory industries employed 17.5 per cent of the working force in the secondary sector (9.7 lakhs) as against 21.8 per cent in India. Moreover, in both the factory and the non-factory categories, the major share of employment opportunities is monopolized by a few industries which can by no means claim to be in the forefront of modern industries.

1.45 In the non-factory sector, out of a total working force of 7.8 lakh persons, almost 50 per cent of the workers are employed in the coir industry, the foremost industry of Kerala. As in most cottage industries, the maximum degree of mechanization in coir industry never goes beyond a spinning wheel. In Malabar, even that is missing, since spinning operations are mostly carried on with hand. Similarly in the factory sector, the three major industries, viz., cashewnut, textile and coir factories which account for 64 per cent of factory employment, are entirely unmechanized.

1 Factory type of units are defined as those falling within the coverage of Section 2 in (*i*) and (*ii*) of the Factories Act, 1948. These include all those factories employing more than 20 workers as well as those employing between 10 to 20 workers, if using power.

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWII Kerala AWII

crops is about 8 per cent of the gross cropped area. A direct consequence of this type of cropping pattern is the high degree of commercialization which has been attained in the agricultural sector. This has important implications for the State economy. The State exports its commercial crops, and imports its foodgrain requirements. In this exchange the State stands to gain since cash crops yield far higher return per unit of area than the food crops. Secondly, quite a few of the commercial crops grown in the State are of a perennial nature and require large investments. This has led to the establishment of numerous large scale organized plantations and farms, although small farms also play an important role.

2.6 A chronic food deficit is the third important feature of the agricultural sector, mentioned above (para 2.1). The current production of foodgrains is roughly 967,000 tons. Current requirements on the basis of a norm of 17 ozs.[1] of foodgrains per day per adult (unit) work out to a figure of 24 lakh tons. The gap between food requirements and the current level of production thus works out to over 50 per cent of total requirements. This is higher than in any other State. However, this need not cause excessive anxiety. It is not necessary for every State in the Union to try and achieve self-sufficiency in food at the cost of other more valuable commercial crops. From the long run point of view, the aim should be to strike a balance between supply and demand for foodgrains at the national, rather than, strictly, at the level of the State. The psychological desire to attain a balance between local supply and demand for foodgrains in the State is a legacy of the lean period of 1940-50 when the State was hard hit by the severe food shortage prevailing in the country.

Climate and Geographical Factors

2.7 The climate and rainfall in Kerala are excellently suited to the prevailing cropping pattern. The climate is cool and humid in the high ranges while it is humid and warm in the plains. The range of temperature variations during the year is very small, the maximum never going beyond 90°F and minimum rarely below 75°F. The humidity, however, is very high in the rainy season—about 90 per cent. The State is fortunate in respect of rainfall. The normal annual rainfall is 95 inches a year ; it may be as high as 150 inches in the high ranges, but nowhere it is less than 65 inches. Most of the precipitation occurs during May to September when the State receives the south-west monsoon. Taking the State as a whole, it may be said that it is one of the most wet areas in the country (Table 1).[2] Assam has about the same normal rainfall as Kerala. Only the Konkan coast (Bombay) and South Kanara (Mysore) exceed it. The annual deviation in rainfall is also comparatively low with the co-efficient of mean deviation at 6.5 per cent for Travancore-Cochin and 9.2 per cent for Malabar (Table 1). On the whole rains are more reliable in Kerala than in most other States.

2.8 Kerala has two distinct geographical divisions, namely, the Travancore-Cochin and the Malabar area. The soils of Travancore-Cochin area are generally

[1] The Nutritional Advisory Committee to the Government of India recommended 18 ozs. of foodgrains per adult unit per day as the desirable norm. We have used a slightly smaller figure (17 ozs. per day) in our calculations.

[2] [Table, appearing on p. 269 of the text, has not been processed - Compiler]

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWII Kerala AWII

ensure a better return to the farmer. This creates an incentive for achieving a still higher level of production. And at the same time, the rise in agricultural income provides a substantial purchasing power for absorbing consumer goods output of the industrial sector. The need for an emphasis on agricultural development is, therefore, very much inter-related with steady industrial growth.

2.22 Agricultural development in Kerala can follow two possible directions. First, the aim could be to raise the yield rate and output of the existing crops with a special emphasis on increasing the food production. Alternatively, the policy could be directed towards bringing about a modification in the existing cropping pattern by giving greater weightage to the commercial crops and thus ensuring better returns from the land. On the basis of available evidence; it seems that for Kerala the latter course of action would be the more appropriate one. It has already been pointed out that it is not necessary for each State to try to achieve complete self-sufficiency in foodgrains.

2.23. A wide gap in food requirements of the extent which exists at present in the State, can be covered only through extension of area under paddy in addition to increase in the yield per acre. Whereas efforts at raising the yield rate are justified by all means, it would be unwise to divert land from commercial crops to the cultivation of paddy. Apart from direct importance of cash crops to the industrial growth of Kerala in the form of raw material supply, commercial crops make a substantial contribution to the industrial effort of India through the large amount of foreign exchange earnings they bring in annually. Export of commodities like tea, pepper, cardamom, cashewnut and coconut products from Kerala earn foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 55 crores every year—roughly one-twelfth of overall foreign exchange earnings of the entire country. It would, therefore, be in the interest of the State economy to maximize returns from land by growing higher value crops in place of low value crops like tapioca and small millets in as much area as possible. This would require a reversal of the policy pursued so far in favour of attaining self-sufficiency in food within the State. The gap in food requirements which cannot be covered through intensive measures of paddy cultivation could continue to be met by imports from the other parts of India. Since the relative advantage lies in the cultivation of commercial crops, some of which can be grown only in Kerala, attention should be focussed on the development of cash crops whereas the problem of wiping out the food deficit can be relegated to a secondary place for the present.

2.24 The extension of the area under commercial crops should be undertaken on a scientific and planned basis. Considerations such as gross value of product per unit area and demand for the crop and suitability of soil are some of the important aspects that have to be examined in this connection. It is not possible to state the exact extent and nature of substitution without an intensive land use potential survey of different regions. A survey of this type was being carried out by the State Agriculture Department. However, the future scope for some of commercial field crops is analysed below on the basis of whatever information is available. The possibilities of commercial plantation crops are discussed in the last part of this chapter.

Chapter 5

Fisheries

433 226 KERALA IS THE leading fish producing State in India. Its present production of fish amounts to about 310,000 tons. Maharashtra comes next with an output of 210,000 tons. Over 80 per cent (260,000 tons) of the fish landings are obtained from the sea and the rest from inland sources. About 75,000 tons of fish (70,000 tons cured and 5,000 tons fresh) are at present annually exported to other parts of the country, and 2,000 tons (frozen and canned) are sent abroad. Allowing for a very negligible import, the net quantity available for local use comes to 235,000 tons per annum.

262 [171] 5.2 Fish eating is popular in this State. About four-fifths of the population are accustomed to taking fish regularly. At present the per capita consumption of fish in the State is 41.30 lbs. per year for the fish eating population and 33.00 lbs. per year for the total population, as against 9.50 lbs. and 6.10 lbs. respectively for India as a whole.

433 226 [464] [511] [434] [592] 5.3 About 85,000 persons (1.60 % of total labour force) are directly engaged in fishing activities and they produce a net output of Rs. 5.60 crores (1.60 % of State income). The standard of living of an average fisherman in Kerala is very depressed. The average annual income of a fisherman's household in Kerala, consisting of 6.40 members, is estimated at Rs. 542, or only Rs. 85 per fisherman, that is, about one-third of the average per capita income in the State.

PRESENT STATUS OF FISHERIES

Marine Fisheries

5.4 *Coastal Fisheries*: Although Kerala has a comparatively short coastline (10% of all-India) Kerala ranks first in the production of marine fish (about 30% of all-India Production—Table 25). Large marine fish catch can probably be attributed to the much more intensive fishing effort made in Kerala. In 1957, the ratio of man-hours per mile of coastline came to about five times the average for other States. This heavy fishing pressure is paralleled by the high pressure of population on land, leading to an intensive use of the natural resources. Intensive fishing is not only confined to the number of hours of fishing put in, but it also includes the use of more efficient methods. It will be seen from Table 26 that the catch per man-hour of fishing in Kerala compares favourably with that in the other States.

2,2 [Tables 25 & 26 appearing on p. 288, have not been processed -- Ans.]

5.5 The average annual landing of marine (coastal) fish is estimated at 260,000 tons (35% of the all-India output) and the gross value of marine catches at Rs. 6.5 crores.

5.6 The catches from coastal waters comprise such commercially important species of fish as Sardines (20%), Prawns (13%), Mackerel (11%), Sharks (5%), Silverbellies (4%), Horse Mackerel (4%), Sole (3%) and Ribbon fish (3%). According to a sample survey conducted by the ICAR in Travancore-Cochin area, about 61 per cent of the total landings are consumed in fresh condition and the remaining part is utilized in various fish-based industries. (An alternative estimate by the State Fisheries Department puts the ratio as fifty-fifty.)

5.7 Dug-out, plank-built canoes and catamarans are the main types of crafts employed for fishing. Dug-out canoes are more popular throughout the State. Boat seines, gill nets, lines and hooks, coast nets and shore seines are the important tackle used in Kerala. Drift nets are used for catching Sardines, Mackerels and Sharks while long lines are sometimes employed for exploiting Horse Mackerels and Shark fisheries.

5.8 During the last decade efforts have been made to introduce mechanized fishing in order to raise the outturn and improve per capita income of the fishermen. Experiments for mechanizing indigenous boats and introducing suitable new types of mechanized crafts have been carried out in the State with the help of FAO experts and the Indo-Norwegian Project. However, unlike Maharashtra, Kerala has made very little progresss in mechanizing its fishing activity. This is mainly explained by the fact that the indigenous crafts in use in Kerala at present, have been found unsuitable for the installation of engines. Thus, to introduce mechanized boats, new boats have to be designed and constructed. As a result of a number of investigations and trials, a few small mechanized boats, ranging from 20 to 26 feet in length, have been recently introduced in the State. The Indo-Norwegian Project has so far issued 88 mechanized boats to the fishermen who completed training with the project. In addition to these, the State Fisheries Department has also issued 39 mechanized vessels. Of these, 25 have been issued to fishermen; of the rest, some are operated by the Department at training centres for transportation of fish and some still remain idle.

5.9 In Kerala, as in some other marine States of India, mechanized boats are issued at subsidized rates to fishermen's cooperatives, groups of fishermen and to trainees who have been trained at one of the two Training Centres in the State. The quantum of subsidies is in line with the all-India pattern, that is, 50 per cent of the cost of engine, 25 per cent of the cost of hull and 33⅓ per cent on that of fishing nets and gears.[1]

5.10 The Indo-Norwegian Project is playing an important role in the development of fisheries in Kerala. The project aims at the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the fishermen. The programme envisages an increase in the production of fish as well as the earnings of the fishermen, improved handling and distribution of catches, the promotion of cooperative activities, and better sanitation and living conditions in the fishermen's villages. The project has also undertaken the supply of fish to the interior areas of the State. It provides most of the basic requirements of

[1] The Indo-Norwegian Project issued nets and gear on 80 per cent and hull and engine on 50 per cent subsidy in the beginning.

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

Transport

5.46 The entire coastline of Kerala is well served by the railways. From Trivandrum to Kayankulam and from Tirur to Manjeswar, a total distance of 220 miles, the tracks are only two to three miles from the sea coast. In addition, there is a motorable road running almost all along the entire coastline. Head loads, bicycles, motor lorries, all these modes are employed for the transportation of fish to the markets depending on the distance of the landing sites from the consuming centres.

5.47 The State Fisheries Department operates four insulated vans. In addition, the Department operates two insulated carrier boats, one from Cochin and the other from Azhikode. These boats transport iced-fish through the inland waters to the interior places. For the marketing of fish in the interior areas, the Indo-Norwegian Project operates eight refrigerated vans.

5.48 It is estimated that the State will require about 60 road vehicles and 20 carrier vessels during the next 10 years. The capital expenditure on these is expected to be about Rs. 40 lakhs, of which Rs. 15 lakhs would be required during the Third Plan. The trucks and carrier vessels should, as far as possible, be owned and operated by Fishermen's Cooperative Societies. Expansion of insulated wagon facilities on the railways will be equally necessary. Insulated wagons should be provided on routes connecting the major production centres with the consumption centres.

Marketing

5.49 The marketing of fish in Kerala is not well organized. At present it is controlled by a few moneylenders and fish merchants. The fishermen are very poor and have generally to depend on borrowings during the off season. A departmental survey reveals that in 1958 the fishermen in Kerala had total assets of only about Rs. 30 lakhs against a total debt of Rs. 135 lakhs. Only a small percentage of the fishermen in Kerala own the boats and nets they use. Most of them work as employees under few boat-owner fishermen. In the pay-off period the boat-owner advances small amounts to the fishermen for their day-to-day needs. The catch is auctioned at the landing centres. The bidders include the fish curers, the retailers and lorry owners, who generally supply fish to the retailers.

5.50 Fish prices fluctuate considerably even in the course of the day. Fish is never weighed in the market. They are measured by standards such as heap, basket, and number, and these vary from market to market. The important wholesale fish markets in the State are located at Trivandrum, Kottayam, Tonur, Trichur, Kozhikode, Alwaye, Changanacherry and Athirumpuzha.

5.51 Changanacherry, Athirumpuzha and Vaniyankulam are the most important markets for cured and salted fish. In the coastal areas the consumption of dried fish is confined mostly to the off-season when fishing totally stops. In the interior of the State, owing to lack of transport facilities, cured fish is sold for the major part of the year. The State has a number of retail fish markets, every town or a group of villages having at least one.

5.52 Fish marketing in Kerala requires a great deal of improvement, both

Chapter 8

Transport

IN THE CONTEXT of a developing economy, the transport system has a special role to fulfil. Apart from opening up the country and linking all areas with each other, it has to meet the growing movement of raw materials on account of more rapid development of industry and rising levels of consumption and distribution. The particular relations of production, consumption and distribution obtaining in the State and changing, according to the emphasis of the Plans, entail certain characteristic tasks for the transport system of the State. In Kerala, for example the persistent food deficit of the State, necessitates movements of rice and other cereals by road and rail from adjacent States,[1] and foreign or coastal imports[2] through ports such as Cochin, Calicut or Trivandrum. Fish and fish-products are distributed from the ports by road, rail and waterways in local and inter-State interchange. From her fields and plantations orginate exports of coconuts, copra, pepper, ginger, cardamom, cashew kernels, tapioca, tea, coffee and rubber. The State's forests covering about a fourth of its area, furnish varieties of timber for clearance from one of the biggest timber markets in the world ; countryside distribution and foreign exports take place from Kallayi and Calicut. Exports of mineral ores, such as ilmenite, have to be handled from ports like Quilon or Chavra. The transport media serve continually, except for the interruption of the monsoon, in the carriage of raw materials, fuels, and essential construction and other goods such as cement, iron and steel, sugar and textiles. In particular, the transport network has to cater daily to the needs of industrial establishments, e.g., rubber and titanium factories at Trivandrum ; cashew industry at Quilon, the aluminium and ceramic industries at Kundara, paper and plywood factories at Trichur ; the coir and coir products of Alleppey ; the cement and sugar factories at Kottayam, the rayon factory at Perumbavoor ; the industrial complex at Alwaye comprising fertilizer, chemical, textile, glass and aluminium industries ; the saw mills and timber-based industries, soap, etc., in the Calicut area ; the big plywood factory at Baliapatam; the tile industry at Quilon, Trichur, Feroke, Calicut and other centres.

8.2 As regards passenger traffic, the Southern Railway carried 16.2 million passengers in 1959, the pressure of traffic being notable at Calicut, Quilon, Ernakulam, Alwaye and Trivandrum Central. The nationalized road transport services carried 65.3 million passengers in 1959. The passenger motor-boat services operating on the inland waterways carry 27,700 passengers daily. About 1,100 passengers

[1] Over 600,000 tons.
[2] About 80,000 tons in a recent year.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

mentioned in vernacular books, are Kiriyam, Illam, Svarupam, Itacheri or Idacheri, Pallichan, Ashtikkurichchi, Vattakātan, Otatu, Pulikkal, Vyapari, Vilakkitalavan, and Veluthetan. Of these Ashtikkurichchi and Pulikkal are divisions of Mārān, Vyapari is a division of Chettis, and Vilakkitalavan and Veluthetan are barbers and washermen respectively.

"The chief divisions of Nāyars, as now recognised, are as follows:—

1. Kiriyam, a name said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit griha, meaning house. This represents the highest class, the members of which were, in former times, not obliged to serve Brāhmans and Kshatriyas.

2. Illakkar.—The word illam indicates a Nambūtiri Brāhman's house, and tradition has it that every illam family once served an illam. But, in mediæval times, any Nāyar could get himself recognised as belonging to the Illam division, provided that a certain sum of money, called adiyara, was paid to the Government. The Illakkar are prohibited from the use of fish, flesh, and liquor, but the prohibition is not at the present day universally respected. In some parts of Malabar, they have moulded many of their habits in the truly Brāhmanical style.

3. Svarupakkar.—Adherents of the Kshatriya families of Travancore. The members of the highest group, Parūr Svarupam, have their purificatory rites performed by Mārāns. It is stated that they were once the Illakkar servants of one Karuttetathu Nambutiri, who was the feudal lord of Parūr, and afterwards became attached to the royal household which succeeded to that estate, thus becoming Parūr Svarupakkar.

4. Padamangalam and Tamil Padam were not originally Nāyars, but immigrants from the Tamil

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

796 themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire.
[302] They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee, and sometimes with a superficial coating of
[276] antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks down the middle of their foreheads. They also chew betel, and thus redden their mouths and lips.
[526] They then proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro on what is usually known as an uzhinjal, or swing made
[262] of bamboo. On the festival day, after the morning bath is over, they take a light meal, and in the noon the family dinner is voraciously attacked, the essential and almost universal ingredients being ordinary ripe plantain fruits, and a delicious preparation of arrowroot powder purified and mixed with jaggery (crude sugar) or sugar, and also cocoanut. Then, till evening, dancing and
[593] merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in. The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening, as they are bound to do on
[586] the Ōnam and Vishu occasions. Failure to do this is looked upon as a step, or rather the first step, on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separa-
[132] tion or divorce from the wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during which the festival commonly falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths, and their frolics in the water. The biting cold of the season, which makes their persons shiver and quiver, becomes to them in the midst of all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. The two items described above, viz., the swinging and beating of the water, have each their own distinctive

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household, and to wives and children, money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the more numerically large families, similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. One other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities, and some other accessories to the family workmen, whether they live on the family estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal the festival practically concludes. In some families, after

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
Kerala AW11

566
[462] work connected with the harvesting, separating the paddy from the stalks, etc. They are employed as a rule throughout the year by their masters; in leisure days however they are paid a little less than the stated wage.

●[262] They take kanji (rice boiled in water) and toddy in the morning, toddy in the afternoon, cooked rice at night; they eat also fish and flesh. They behave well, are obedient and honest and loyal to their masters, very earnest about their work, but are completely illiterate. There are no schools for them in the village.

[778] [796] They worship spirits in the shape of stocks and stones; and on the occasion of the festivals of their Gods and Goddesses they take a good dose of toddy and with drums and bugles and priests dance in the premises of the 'temple'.

564 There are sub-divisions among the Pulayas, Cherumas, Paraiyas, Nayadis, Malayas and others, who form separate castes among themselves and are restricted in their intercourse with one another.

[361] The Cherumas dwell in colonies of two or three families each, in low, small thatched huts near the land of their masters. It must be admitted that they are not treated properly by the high caste Hindus, though they form the backbone of agricultural labour in these parts. They are low paid and underfed and treated with contempt and sometimes with harshness by the other castes and their masters. It is a wonder that they still cherish obedience to their masters and earnestness in their work. There are a few who try to get rid of the yoke by running away, but the majority are contented and stay with their masters. They are experts in practical agricultural work and can face any sort of weather.

311 *Land and Occupation of land—*

	ACRES.
Area of wet lands	653·24
,, dry lands	937·21
,, lands watered by wells	...
,, common waste ,, ...	18·81
Pasture other than common waste	33·94
Woods and forests	1,912·35
Fruit trees and scattered shade trees ...	301·48

312 There are altogether five public tanks in the village, most of which are not used for irrigation purposes at all, but for bathing, which is done by all at least once a day. There are no public wells. The cultivation of rice solely depends on the rains of the South-West Monsoon (June—September) which are copious, and of the North-East Monsoon in November. Every house however contains a well, from which water is drawn for drinking purposes and for watering the compound gardens in the summer. Water can be obtained at a very slight depth in most parts except at the foot of the hills. The sides of the tanks, usually not very large in size, are paved step by step with granite or laterite stones by which people can step down into the water for bathing. Water is lifted from the wells by means of pots for drinking purposes, but for watering gardens lifts of various sorts are used.

406 The water wheel, which costs about Rs. 35, is very rarely used except in *kol* fields where water has to be lifted out of the land.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

465 Wages are paid both in money and in kind; more often in kind since they find it more to their immediate advantage. The rate of wages is two annas six pies or its equivalent in corn at the standard price, for an unskilled labourer; and four and at times five annas for skilled artisans.

435 The price of paddy varies in different seasons. In the harvest season and sometimes after it, the price ranges between 2½ and 2 paras a rupee. But towards June and July the price goes up to between 1 and 1½ paras a rupee. This is the only food which [262] can be called staple. In times of scarcity the poorer people depend on jack fruits, mango and fish, of which the latter alone need be purchased, and that is cheaper than other foods.

454 Excepting the jenmis who are large zamindars, there are but six houses which have made savings. The bulk of the families are unable to liberate themselves from the grasp of the creditors.

The capital saved by these families is employed in lending to the needy agriculturists. A microscopically small amount has gone on jewellery among these middle class families, but with the jenmi the case is different. It looks as though the capitalist knows no way to employ his capital except lending to neighbours.

426 *Debt.*—The extent of indebtedness cannot be definitely ascertained by enquiry. But from what I have been able to gather from the accounts of two capitalist families, I have been able to make an almost correct estimate of the state of things with the agriculturist. Ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 800 one family account consists of the names of thirty debtors from Kothachira. These are all standing debts and the interest on these varies from 9 per cent to 12 per cent. Twelve per cent is the current rate of "polite" interest, as people call it. But there are capitalists who lend money even at 24 and 30 per cent in the neighbourhood. The capital thus employed, however, is not the result of direct saving but is ancestral property bequeathed by their fathers, who were the heads of a jenmi family.

511 Thus we find that capitalists who have money at all to lend,
426 have got the money by other sources and not by saving. The agriculturist has many difficulties to meet with. He has no land and not enough stock and implements. His family is large and the expense is ordinarily far beyond his income. From his field cultivation, after all expenses have been deducted, he gets very little for himself. The rents are very high. The capital employed in stock is vital to him and yearly his lot is to lose by death of cattle either by disease or by wild beasts. Last year there were two cases of the latter. Those who have garden cultivation have this profit to utilize. But the majority own no gardens. The population has grown but not the means of subsistence, and no family except the few named find it possible to maintain their family purely from the proceeds of their toil. Thus they incur debt, but debt once incurred hangs heavy on the debtor. Not only is he unable to find means to pay the high rate of interest on the previous year's debt, but he must borrow at all costs again if he is to avoid absolute starvation of his family. This is regularly continued. Litigation follows and an additional and unprofitable expense is thus laid on his head. Law interferes and whatever property he has is lost. But the law does not kill the people, and

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

323 would be better paid. Some of these potters are employed by tile works producing pottery and glazed earthenware and are there paid Rs. 10 or so a month.

322 *Carpenters.*—There are five families of carpenters. There is steady demand for their labour, which is well paid. The occupation is hereditary and confined to the caste of 'Asaris', as they are called, a division of the Thiyyas. Full time is spent on the craft, which follows very old traditions. Earnings average about 6 annas a day. The carpenters go out to other villages for work.

326 *Goldsmiths, blacksmiths.*—Two or three families of each combine their traditionary crafts with agriculture, and are better off than most other low caste families. In the agricultural seasons they work morning and evening in the fields; and only at noon at their crafts. So they earn wages in money and in kind. The goldsmith earns Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 in this way per month; the blacksmith Rs 5 to Rs. 10.

325 *Moulders.*—There is one family making vessels of bell-metal for all sorts of uses—domestic utensils, temple bells, etc. They are very skilled workers and well paid, owing to the great demand for their productions. Some cups, bowls, etc., made by these are very beautiful and exquisitely designed and polished. Earnings Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month, according to state of business.

285 *Basket-makers.*—Baskets, mats, etc., are made out of the bamboo by the Parials. Very useful, but cheap. Only a local market and mostly made to order, as most business is in the village. Only spare time is spent in this occupation; it is miserably ill paid owing to weakness in bargaining. There is scope for development.

293 *Umbrella makers.*—Umbrella making is the hereditary occupation of the Panans. The umbrellas are made of palm leaves and bamboo, and much used in the village. Until recently imported umbrellas were not seen. The indigenous article costs only a few coppers and gives better protection against rain, but is unwieldy. The earnings of the Panans from this source are very low, and they are now taking to agricultural labour.

[262] *The Chettis* make what are called *Pappatams*—the thin cakes to be fried in oil, for which Malabar is famous. The Chettis are also cartmen and take goods and passengers to neighbouring

[276] places. The *Paravans* make slaked lime for chewing. About half the adults chew a mixture of betel, areca, and slaked lime.

438 *Village trade.*—The village buys every year agricultural implements such as ploughs, spades, levelling boards, harrows, *kuzhi kutti*. Most of these are made to order by the village craftsmen. Some are bought at neighbouring fairs. Seed is usually preserved by the cultivator out of his produce, but sometimes he is forced by poverty to consume it and then borrows it or buys it with borrowed money. Live stock is bought at the weekly fair of the neighbouring village of Vaniamkulam.

The villagers buy the articles of ordinary consumption like salt, sugar, kerosene oil, gingelly and coconut oil, as well as the various grains and pulses at the village shop. Sugar is a luxury to all but the richest villagers. More than Rs. 600 worth of toddy is sold in the village, the Cherumas, Pariahs and Panans being the chief consumers. They pay in paddy, out of their wages. Clothing is bought at neighbouring fairs or in the nearest trading centre,

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

other work demanding skill or strength is mainly done by them. They handle tools better than the Hindus. A strong Muhammadan coolie will carry sacks of grain of 8 paras weighing 160 lb. a distance of two miles half a dozen times in a day, a Hindu coolie will carry only half a sack.

Women's work.—In the better class families, especially the Brahman and higher Nayar families, women confine themselves to household business and looking after the children. Among the lower castes they work for their living. They help the men in agricultural work, such as transplanting seedlings, sowing, reaping and threshing. Rice husking is their special occupation, they also carry paddy from place to place on their heads. They are paid less than the men, three edangalis where men get four or five. Children also help in agricultural work and in looking after cattle, sheep and goats. Cheruma women work just like the men and get about the same wages. Some Nayar women go out to work in Brahman families.

Rice is the staple food, either by itself or in the form of kanji (a sort of watery gruel). Its price depends on that of paddy. The price of paddy is lowest after the first harvest in September, being 2 to 2½ paras (ten edangalis = one para) for one rupee. In about two months the price rises, and paddy sells at about 1¾ paras for a rupee. With the second harvest in December or January the price again falls, but rises gradually till July or August to its maximum height and grain is only 1·5 to 1·8 paras for a rupee. Towards the end of June 1916 it was only 1·6 for a rupee. Price fluctuations are greater or less according to weather conditions and outside demand. In August 1917 the price was 1·3 paras per rupee, and prices were still rising.

Not more than 5 per cent, or 20 families, mostly of the higher classes, have made savings.

Very little money is invested in agricultural or industrial capital of the productive kind except the ordinary farming stock. Some persons (foolishly) invest their money in Kanom land the value of which largely depends on the goodwill of the landlord. Few are rich enough to buy land in absolute ownership.

Savings bank accounts are unknown. No one apparently has any.

Loans to neighbours is a popular and common way of utilizing savings, especially loans to agriculturists for short periods on high interest, 12 to 24 per cent. Even higher interest is obtained by speculative loans on grain. Thus before harvest a poor peasant may borrow grain for a month, repaying 102 or 102½ measures for 100 measures borrowed.

Most saving families possess some jewellery and other movable goods worth about one-eighth to half of their total capital, an obvious attraction to thieves in former years. The amount of jewellery is deceptive as a test of prosperity.

Savings are utilized also for the purchase of houses, gardens, and increased consumption. Under this head should also be mentioned small investments in what are called 'Kuris' (chit-funds).

The majority of the villagers are in debt, for smaller or larger amounts. During certain seasons of the year many families